

# Piranhas swim to Rhineland Division title

## Conclude season with EFSL ‘Champs’ event in historic Munich pool

Story & photo by Melanie Casey

Three weeks after winning the European Forces Swim League’s Rhineland Division title, the Stuttgart Piranhas brought their season to a successful conclusion Feb. 16 as EFSL teams from throughout Europe converged on Munich for the league’s 2003 Championship Meet, known colloquially as “Champs.”

The meet was held in the *Olympiaschwimhalle* in historic Olympia Park – the very pool in which American swimmer Mark Spitz won a record seven gold medals in the 1972 Summer Olympics.

More than 500 swimmers from 19 teams competed in 87 events in this year’s championship meet.

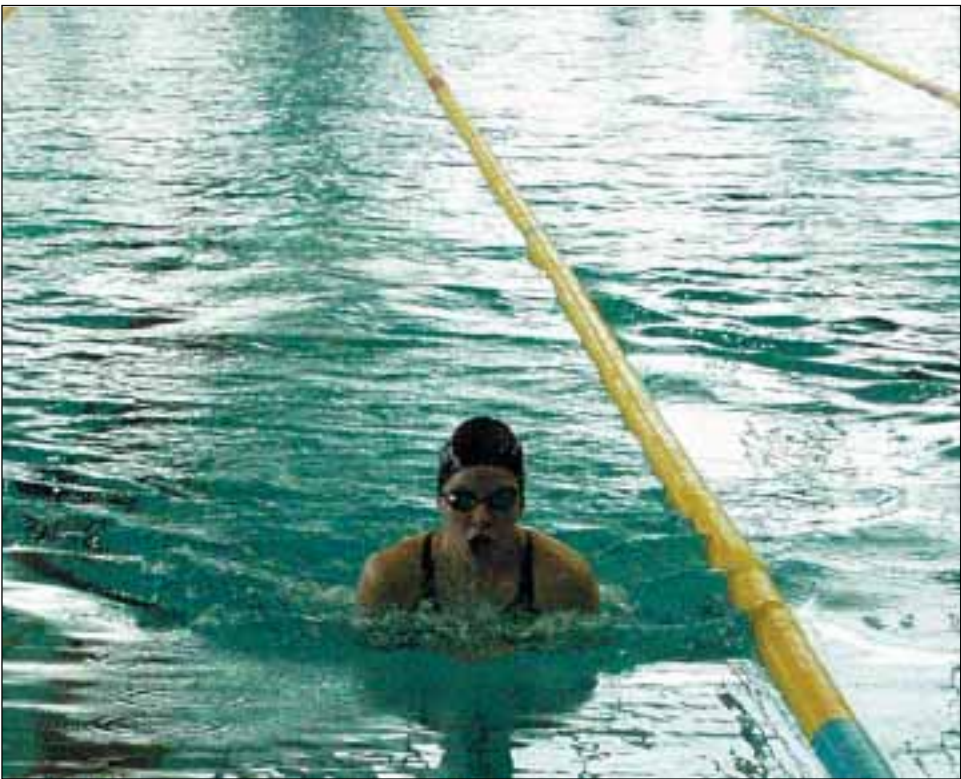
Champs marked the culmination of a season that began, for most, last September.

All participating swimmers, with the exception of relay members, were required to swim qualifying times during the season in order to attend. Each competitor could enter no more than three events.

Most events had room for 16 swimmers from each age group. Qualifying times varied with age, sex and distance. Though the cutoff times were challenging, the chance to be a part of Champs gave swimmers a goal to work toward over the long season.

With nearly 1,000 swimmers competing in the league, qualifying was in itself an accomplishment.

More than 30 Piranhas made the trip to the 2003 Champs



**With no competition in sight, Monica Cooney, 14, swims her way to 1st place in the girls’ 100-meter breaststroke (13- to 14-year-old division).**

meet. Competition was tough, but the swimmers’ hard work over the season paid off. Individual highlights included the following:

■ Tabitha Silver placed 2nd in the girls’ 13- to 14-year-old 100-meter individual medley, 3rd in the girls’ 13- to 14-year-

**The Stuttgart Piranhas need a head coach for the 2003-2004 season.**

- Formal swimming experience is preferred but not required.
- This is a paid position that involves a significant commitment.

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old 100-meter freestyle, and 2nd in the girls’ 13- to 14-year-old 100-meter backstroke.

■ Silver and teammates Monica Cooney, Justin Bentley and Brian Conner placed 2nd in the mixed 13- to 14-year-old 200-meter medley relay.

■ Angela Jividen placed 3rd in the girls’ 9-year-old 50-meter freestyle.

■ Monica Cooney won the girls’ 13- to 14-year-old 100-meter breaststroke.

The EFSL began in 1975 as a way to provide an organized competitive swimming program for the children of U.S. service member and civilians stationed in Europe.

It does not compete with local, regional or national European swimming programs.

The EFSL’s 19 teams are divided into four divisions representing five countries: Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.